REMARKS

Claims 1-18 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1 and 9 are amended. Claims 17 and 18 are added to recite additional features supported by this specification, for example, at least at lines 20-27 on page 13 and lines 8-22 on page 14. No new matter is added. Reconsideration in view of the above amendments and following remarks is respectfully requested.

Applicants appreciate the courtesies shown to Applicants' representatives by Examiner Hoffman in the August 1, 2007 personal interview. Applicants' separate record of the substance of the interview is incorporated into the following remarks.

The Office Action rejects claims 1 and 8 on the grounds of non-statutory obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11, 12 and 14-16 of copending application Satake (U.S. Patent Publication No. 2004/0193889). To obviate this rejection, a Terminal Disclaimer is co-filed along with this Amendment. Thus, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the non-statutory obviousness-type double patenting rejection.

The Office Action rejects claims 1, 3, 4, 7-9, 11, 12, 15 and 16 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Shear (U.S. Patent No. 6,157,721) and rejects claims 2, 5, 6, 10, 13 and 15 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Shear in view of Prange (U.S. Patent No. 4,725,946). Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections.

Shear and Prange, either individually or in combination, fail to disclose or suggest information processor having digital signatures wherein the information processor is incorporated into at least one of a printer, scanner, facsimile and photocopy apparatus, as recited in independent claim 1 and similarly recited in independent claim 9.

Shear, at col. 10, lines 4-8, and Fig. 4, discloses the analysis and digital signature steps 102 and 104 that are performed by a verification section 100. A provider 54 provides each

load module with associated specifications 110 that identify the load module and describes the functions that the load module performs. At col. 10, lines 54-59, Shear discloses that once the verification authority 100 is satisfied with the load module 54, it affixes a digital "seal of approval" 106 to a load module. In Fig. 4, Shear discloses that the digital sealing process is performed by a stamp 114.

Prange in col. 9, lines 35-64, is merely an example of an algorithm for realizing the V operation of a semaphore. A semaphore is a mechanism of an exclusion control when a plurality of processes share a resource and is a type of architecture for process management in an operating system. In col. 7, lines 56-58, Prange discloses a process in which a small integer identifies a process requesting a piece of information. The P operation and V operation of a semaphore are also known to a person having ordinary skill in the art to differ from an authentication process. (Please refer to the following webpage: http://www.cise.ufl.edu/research/parallel patterns/pattern language/background/glossary.htm).

Thus, Shear and Prange, either individually or in combination, fail to disclose or suggest information processor having digital signatures wherein the information processor is incorporated into at least one of a printer, scanner, facsimile and photocopy apparatus, as recited in independent claim 1 and similarly recited in independent claim 9.

With respect to new claims 17 and 18, Shear and Prange, either individually or in combination, fail to disclose or suggest a signature unit that includes a first unit for electronically signing each of a plurality of portions, and a second unit for electronically signing an overall group of the plurality of portions electronically signed by the first unit as discussed at the interview and, as recited in independent claim 17 and similarly recited in independent method claim 18.

Shear fails to disclose or suggest the nesting structure of the electronic signatures as recited in claims 17 and 18.

In view of the foregoing, independent claims 1, 9, 17 and 18 define patentable subject matter. Claims 2-8 and 10-16 depend from independent claims 1 and 9, respectively, and are patentable for the same reasons, as well as for the additional features recited therein. Thus, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the rejections.

Applicants respectfully submit that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-18 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,

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JAO:EXC/lah

Attachments:
Terminal Disclaimer
Amendment Transmittal

Date: August 15, 2007

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